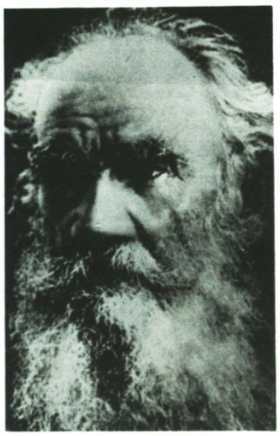
# BACKING LACKING



● Leo Tolstoy

AFTER one of his short trips back to England, Aylmer Maude was asked by Tolstoy to report on the progress being made towards adopting Henry George's reforms.

Maud later recorded* the conversation:

"He asked me . . . how the single-tax movement was getting on. I said that I thought it was a small movement not making much way.

"'How is that, when the question is one of such enormous importance?'

"I said I thought that the great majority of Englishmen were too conservative to attend to it, and the Socialists and other advanced parties had gone past Henry George and recognised interest, and private property in the means of production, as being also wrong.

"'That is a pity,' said Tolstoy. 'If the Conservatives are too conservative to attend to it, and the advanced parties have gone past it, who is to do this work that so urgently needs doing?'"

* *Quoted from Aylmer Maude,* Tolstoy and his Problems. *London: Constable (1902?)*

# Tolstoy torm

## 's p

***LEO TOLSTOY sent the following appreciation of the Single Tax philosophy to Bernard Eulenstein, the leader of the Single Tax Party in Berlin:***

AT THE present time the extension of man's knowledge in reference to the use of land goes on, and it would appear to me, the process of putting this thought into action must soon commence.

In these processes, which from a social point of view form the chief lessons of our time, Henry George was and is the pioneer and leader of the movement. Herein his paramount importance rests. He has, by his excellent works, materially contributed both to the improving of people's ideas on this question as well as to their direction on a practical basis.

It is curious that in regard to the question of the abolition of the clearly unnatural monopoly of land we have an exact repetition of what, in our opinion, happened when slavery was abolished both in Russia and America.

The government and the leading classes, recognising in their inner consciousness that in the question of land was contained the solution of

all social qu
would, at the
within the re
care for the s
labour inspe
carefully ign
subservient
that the abol
even impossi

Just the sa
for ever so lo
was a dread
asserted, not
soon to abol

At present
with this dif

One would
man of our
cultivate it t
families fro
the possessi
English, Aus
base privileg
affords them
in it.

The merit
thin nothing
defence of p
discuss the

But Henr
his merit; h
highest deg
who canno

He was a
question; h
objections
in the poin
impractica

The prop
the questio
morrow fo
carrying of

The letter

# MINIMAL GOVERNMENT

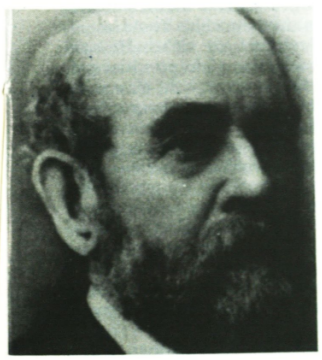
## By Peter Poole

**LEO TOLSTOY was an anarchist. He believed that fundamental Christian ethics based on love and non-violence were sufficient to regulate man's activities. This enabled the Communists, led by Lenin, to paint the great author as an idealist who had little to say about practical affairs.**

**In fact, Tolstoy campaigned hard during the last 25 years of his life — he died in 1910 — for reforms which he considered to be eminently practical. At the heart of his proposals was a change in Russia's land tenure and tax systems. He wanted a Single Tax on land values, a fiscal policy which he adopted from American social reformer, Henry George, whose books he first read in 1885. Tolstoy commended the reform to the Tsars, claiming that the Single Tax would abolish the conditions creating civil unrest.**

**Tolstoy realised that his proposal entailed minimal government — which contradicted his heart-felt preference for no government at all. His friend and translator, Aylmer Maude, noted the apparent contradiction. But Tolstoy had an answer: "The great majority of people still believe in governments and legality — then let them, at least, have that they get good laws, he declared."**

**Maud wrote: "It appears to him utterly wrong that we should maintain laws which will make those who work the land in the next generation dependent on a small number who will be born possessed of the land. That a few of the strongest, cleverest, or most grasping of the labourers may meanwhile succeed in becoming landlords does not mend matters.**



● Henry George

◄ From Page 55

portant in conservation, is a science no less complex and intellectually demanding than any other science, and the development of ecology to ensure the most effective conservation of the environment will require a growing corpus of highly trained scientists and technologists.

*There is every reason for thinking that the demand for human labour in a society properly concerned with the environment will be quite enough to ensure the achievement of "full employment".*

IF, THEN, we are moving rapidly towards a society in which the demand for productive labour will be greatly reduced, and yet the labour in conservation and conservation-linked aspects of education and science will increase no less rapidly, it will be necessary to offer employment in such activities on a scale several orders of magnitude greater than that applying at present.

If sceptics reply that this will prove immensely costly, they are right; but it will probably prove little if any less costly than to pay people for living in the kind of enforced idleness which — as current experience shows — encourages vandalism and crime.

It is important to remember that conservation work may well have an element of production in it. Most kinds of forestry and woodland activity, for example, yields valuabe timber. It is by no means inevitable that such activity should be conducted by public authorities. Profit-making bodies, such as workers' cooperatives or private corporations may well play a substantial, and perhaps a dominant part — although, of course, there must be strict overall control to prevent environmental damage resulting.